

While it may have dropped from the headlines for now, avian influenza (AI) is still a large threat to health and economic security. IRD is helping communities in Ukraine adopt appropriate practices of bird handling, safe consumption of poultry products, and proper hygiene practices with the goal of increasing community awareness of AI and preventing AI outbreaks in both animals and humans in the regions with higher risk.

IRD is a charitable, non-profit, non-governmental organization that focuses its operations in regions of the world that present social, political, and technical challenges, and is a specialist in conflict and post-conflict settings. IRD's mission is to reduce the suffering of the world's most vulnerable groups and provide tools and resources needed to increase their self-sufficiency. IRD has current operations in 30 countries in six core sectors: democracy, governance, and community development; economic growth and public-private partnerships; sustainable food and agriculture systems; health; infrastructure; and relief.



Avian Influenza



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The first instance of avian influenza (AI) was detected around Sivash Lake in Crimea, Ukraine, in October 2005. In February 2006, IRD began a public awareness campaign and to strengthen community-based surveillance through a USAID-funded program to monitor AI in Crimea. In September 2006 the program was expanded to five high-risk southeastern regions, and in September 2007 to 14 of the country's 24 regions. The program has reached approximately 2.5 million people through a variety of activities.

Training

IRD established a network of master and field trainers prepared to educate communities on the risks and prevention of the disease and to respond to potential outbreaks. So far, more than 40 master trainers and 830 field trainers have been trained. In turn, they trained nearly 22,000 specialists using a peer education approach.



IRD has trained local veterinarians and healthcare providers in outbreak management, and assisted local officials and community leaders in creating preparedness plans. IRD has also educated journalists on the details of avian influenza as well as the importance of providing accurate information about the disease to the public.

Public Awareness and Education

With the help of the trainers, IRD is familiarizing the general public in Crimea with AI safety procedures through one-on-one information sharing. Community outreach activities and media campaigns also serve to improve community awareness. IRD uses an interactive and entertaining education approach to educate rural residents about AI through publications, door-to-door visits, interactive theater performances, fairs, village meetings, drawing contests and exhibitions, contests for the most sanitary households, youth mobile teams, and folk performances.

Posters, leaflets, public service announcements, and television and radio programs have reached tens of thousands of people



in high-risk areas. So far, over 100,000 people have been educated about AI by peer trainers. More than 23,000 rural residents have attended musical and theater performances about AI.

School-based campaign activities such as dictation writing, drawing contests, and youth teams, have reached 2.2 million school children. Youth teams have visited over 13,000 households with AI prevention messages to determine the winner of the best AI practices household contest.

Monitoring

IRD organizes and supports 14 mobile teams, one for monitoring and prevention activities in each of the rural regions. So far, these teams have reached over 200,000 persons with AI prevention messages. They also monitor the health of both wild and domestic birds in their regions and report any unexplained deaths to health authorities.

